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WORK and WORSHIP

Labor Problems

By FRANK WESSLEY PHELPS

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WORK and WORSHIP

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"Diseases desperate grown
By desperate applications are relieved
Or not at all."
—Hamlet

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After our President—

To the thinking men and women of the United States, who, realizing the gravity of the labor problem, are seeking in perplexity for its solution, this book is respectfully dedicated.

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Foreword

The main body of this pamphlet originally appeared as "a message to the President" of the United States. Demand for it from various parts of the country has exhausted three editions.

In presenting a fourth edition it has been deemed proper to enlarge and amplify the argument; but in doing so the author has endeavored to adhere strictly to a theme of absorbing interest, and, as he views it, of commanding and pressing importance to the American people and government. The size of the pamphlet is increased by the addition of new chapters and the enlargement of others.

In its new form it is presented with the earnest hope that it may help to hasten the coming of a better and a brighter day for Industrial America.

THE AUTHOR.

Our part is not fitly sustained upon the earth unless the range of our interest and deliberate usefulness includes not only the companions, but the successors of our pilgrimage.

God has lent us the earth for our lives; it is a great entail. It belongs as much to those who are to come after us, and whose names are already written in the book of creation, as to us; and we have no right, by anything we do, or neglect, to involve them in unnecessary penalties or to deprive them of benefits which it was in our power to bequeath.

Men cannot benefit those who are with them as they can benefit those who come after them; and of all the pulpits from which human voice is ever sent forth, there is none from which it reaches as far as from the grave.

—John Ruskin.

I.

WORK AS A NATURAL RIGHT

RIGHTS, for the ordinary purposes of mankind, fall into two broad classifications: Natural Rights and Artificial Rights. Natural rights are those which, perforce, inhere in our lives. They are the "inalienable rights" and include "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." Artificial rights are those prescribed by law or custom for the general good. Both natural and artificial rights are partly personal and partly social in character; for, in organized societies, whatever really is of benefit to the individual also is of benefit to the social mass.

The right to work is a natural right of first importance. Whatever we get out of life, if we earn it, whatever of the things we need for physical and mental comfort and sustenance, what-

ever of pleasure or success in our chosen sphere of action, must come, finally, through a prudent and intelligent exercise of the right to work. Not only so, but whatever we do for those who look to us for what they need, or want, or expect, and whatever we may contribute toward the good of society and its upbuilding, must come out of the exercise of this natural right to do the useful work we are fit to do. Deprive any man of the free exercise of this right, and he at once becomes a social dependent, a burden to himself, his family and society, and a charge against the incomes of men and women engaged in useful and profitable employments.

No man, no body of men, no government has any right, in either law or morals, to deny any man a right to work in any service he is capable and willing to perform, for the exercise of

this right is in obedience to and is made necessary by the supreme impulse of life.

Man's right to live is not more sacred than his right to work. His welfare and his happiness are bound up in the right, and we cannot either deny or unfairly limit the right without inflicting irreparable wrong alike upon the individual and upon society.

Broadly there are only two kinds of labor: Free labor, and slave labor. Free labor is the labor of the man who works where, when and upon whatever terms may be agreeable to him. Slave labor is the labor of the man who works where, when and upon whatever terms may be prescribed by some individual or body of men presuming to control the exercise of his natural right.

We think and talk freely; we read what we like, eat what is most pleasing

to our palates and in other ways seek to build up and keep in fit condition our bodies and our minds; but of what profit is a sound body and good muscles, or a trained mind, if we are to be denied the right freely to use them in whatever work we may be best suited to perform? Moreover, if this natural right to work is to be controlled, how long will it be before other natural rights must be surrendered to the same control? What we think and talk, what we read, what we eat and wear, where we go, and when, or whether we go at all,—are all these things, too, things in which we have a peculiar and intimate personal interest, to pass into other hands? Such a thing is not impossible, not even improbable, unless the right to work in America shall remain a free and untrammeled natural right, for whenever the man who labors for a living surrenders this right, no matter to whom he may surrender it,

he passes, by just so much, into industrial bondage, and, in many instances, will not even get pottage for his birthright.

Moreover, any interference with a natural right in human society is as fatal as interference with the normal cause in any sphere of nature. When we trammel nature, we hurt and mar nature. When we interfere with natural rights in society, we hurt and mar society. If we interfere with man's free exercise of his right to work, we will not only deprive him of his independence of choice and action in his chosen sphere of labor, but we will also develop an industrial system in which the fittest will not always survive, for the question will be not so much the capability and efficiency of the workman, but rather his loyalty to the men who have assumed to control and sell his services. And that, individually and collectively, would

soon lead to industrial disaster in America, for henceforth we must compete with the best disciplined and most efficient brain and brawn units in the civilized world, and the whole question of whether American labor is to hold its present high rating will depend upon the showing we are to make in this new big struggle for world supremacy.

II.

FREEDOM OF CONTRACT

FREEDOM of contract in America, like freedom of conscience, is fundamental; for the one is as necessary to our physical well-being as the other is to our spiritual well-being.

For all of the changes and cataclysmic upheavals in our affairs in America, we still have a Bill of Rights, and of all the things inhering in our organic political life, it is at once the most prescious and the most democratic, for, in the final reckoning, it is the citizen's only safe shield against the possible abuses, injustices and oppresions of majorities or cliques of low or high degree in state or nation.

Behind these guarantees we can always find a reasonably secure refuge if our courts remain true to the great principle upon which we have built the republic.

No sane man would now dare at-

tempt to keep any other man from following the dictates of his own conscience in spiritual matters, for men, under our theory of government, may worship when and where they please, or worship not at all, according as conscience may command. It is not less impious, and certainly not less offensive to the genius and spirit of American political philosophy, for any man to interfere with the fundamental right of any other American citizen freely to enter into contractural relations upon terms believed to be mutually helpful and beneficial.

We buy and sell, in theory at least, whatever we may wish to buy and sell without unjust interference or costly embarrassment. In and out of the law, we denounce any attempt, in any quarter, to trammel these rights, for we regard them as essential to our well-being.

We may freely sell when, where, and upon whatever terms we please, whatever we may produce with our brains or our muscles; and, as a rule, we may buy when, where and what-

ever it may please us to buy; but we are denied the right to sell our labor, or to buy another man's labor, except upon terms to be prescribed by persons in no sense a party to the transaction.

That is not only a violation of American jurisprudence, but it is also an unwarranted invasion of one of the most sacred and most useful natural rights possessed by mankind—the right of a man freely to sell his services, of brain or muscle, upon whatever terms he may consider reasonably fair, just and beneficial to him.

It may look like a waste of time to advert to these old principles; yet when we know that they are daily disregarded and defied from one end of this republic to the other, we are induced to believe that somebody somewhere ought to speak of them, and put in a good word for them, lest we hurry to a time when they will no longer be regarded as having a relation to our common concerns.

Money does not need the protection of the principle we have bedded in the primer of our jurisprudence. Money

can hide and evade them. We have not been able even successfully to tax money.

Those great principles are for the safeguarding of personal rights, rights essentially and fundamentally personal in character, and if we ever get away from them, the loss will be labor's, and not capital's.

This American democracy was built upon these principles; not upon the dry and colorless theory that principles are everything, and men are nothing, but upon the directly contrary theory that principles are nothing except as they further, promote and protect the interests and rights of men,—for men are everything.

The principle which declares a man's right freely to enter into contractural relations for lawful purposes is merely a recognition in the law of a man's right freely to sell his services on terms considered advantageous to him, and to whom he pleases, without hurt, hindrance or prejudice.

III.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

RIGHTS, whether natural or artificial, carry responsibilities with them. If society concedes to us the privilege freely to exercise our natural rights, or if society confer certain artificial rights upon us in efforts to further the common good, we must exercise these rights in responsible fashion, and with due regard for the rights of others.

The line of cleavage between man and society is the line of demarcation between the man's rights and the man's responsibilities. A man has a right to dig his living out of the ground, or to make his living sawing wood; but his responsibility to society would not permit him to saw wood belonging to another man without the other man's sanction.

But the question of the exercise of these simple rights, such as the right to work, and the question of meet-

ing the responsibilities which go with them, are questions to be determined primarily by the two parties having an immediate and direct interest in the outcome; and even the interposition of the government, representing society, is not allowable unless there is a breach of faith or a tort of some sort which would call for judicial adjustment.

These are simple truths; they are not unfamiliar to most of us; and yet when we reflect upon some of the practices of our times, some of the methods employed by militant trade unionists to enforce their demands, their rules and regulations, we are compelled to admit that, simple as are these truths, they still are not accepted by all classes of society.

The main trouble with many trade unionists, particularly with some of the leaders in the labor movement, is that they want rights without the responsibilities which go with them; their interest, they seem to believe, is the only interest, and any workingman or other person who does not accept their opinion on this question and supinely

submit to whatever cause of conduct they may suggest is at once a scabby, hated, hunted, blacklisted outlaw who ought to be either clubbed or stoned to death.

Precisely therein is the weakness of the labor movement.

Probably one-half, or more, of the men and women actively in the movement in America have been coerced into it; and any organization which is held together by so thin a thread as fear in this enlightened age cannot long endure, nor does it deserve to endure, for any organization which owes its existence to the amount of fear it can excite is as much out of harmony with our present notions of civilized society as the pirates of Baratara or the brigands of Morocco.

Moreover, the failure of labor leaders to recognize their responsibilities has tended to put them in a special class, a privileged class, if you please, for if they are to claim and exercise rights, such as they have been able to claim and exercise with judicial sanction, without any recognition of their

responsibilities to members of society not affiliated with organized labor, then they will continue to enjoy special privileges of an exceptionally high order. What other meaning can we read into strikes, boycotts, picketings, blacklisting and a long list of other practices culminating in sabotage and other violences peculiar to the teachings of syndicalism?

Rights and responsibilities must go hand in hand in a democracy, for that is what democracy means.

IV.

WORK AND WORSHIP

MAN has no more sacred right than the right to work in whatever useful service he may see fit to perform. The right to work, in a very real sense, is the basis of the right to live. Society penalizes vagrancy. Society, therefore, is under moral obligation to throw no arbitrary and unnecessary hindrances between the man and the position he is fit to fill. The right to work is more sacred than the right to worship. Men may live without worship. Men cannot live without work.

Yet, while we safeguard the right of the man to worship, or not to worship, according to the dictates of his conscience, we are asked to deny him the right to work except upon terms to be prescribed by an organization with which he may not have any honest sympathy.

Civilization is empty of any meaning of value if in this age we can subject men to a tyranny of this sort. The

Great Charter we wrested from an unwilling King at Runnymede, our own immortal Declaration, and all the sacred documents in our history have no meaning worth remembering if our necks are still to be galled by the yokes of the ancient regime. What difference is there between the religious tyrannies of the time of Justinian in the East, or of Charlemagne in the West, and the economic tyrannies the American people are asked to endure?

There is no difference, in principle or practice, between a religionized state and a unionized state, except that organized labor probably would prove to be a more brutal master than the church proved to be even in its worst periods. Unionism, as we know it, is not moved by the fine moral ideals which always have been part and parcel of religion, and hence, one master and shaper of our destinies, would deal with us with a less scrupulous regard for our rights, liberties and opinions.

But there is another danger. The church, in a very substantial and significant way, has been pandering to

unionism in America. Only a few years ago labor leaders of note were asked to occupy pulpits in Seattle during the meeting of the American Federation of Labor in the Puget Sound metropolis. The incident is significant of the church's attitude toward unionism. Is unionism and the church to combine in an effort to control the affairs of the republic? We do not know and hazard no guess; but evidence is not lacking to suggest such a possibility.

Movements of this character are at war with everything we have stood for in America; they breed class hatred; undermine respect for property and personal rights; encourage intolerance; put a premium upon arrogance of opinion; lower our national ideals, and upset the fundamentals upon which we have built the republic. There is a point beyond which it is unsafe to go in the direction of tyranny of any kind. Liberty once lost is not easily regained. We fought and bled through long, dark centuries for the sacred right to live our own lives in our own way, and if

we now surrender any of the ground we have gained, we may as well sacrifice all of it, for tyranny is ravenous, and, once encouraged, will consume our liberties and leave us as so many moths piled around a candle's wick.

The right to work and the right to worship, without fear, hindrance or dictation, go hand in hand in America, and to oppose either of these rights is to oppose both of them. We have no more right to enslave the body than we have to enslave the conscience of the man; no more right to tell him where, or how, or upon what terms he shall work than we have to tell him where and how he shall worship, and it is alike impudent and infamous for any man or set of men to attempt to do either the one thing or the other.

Surely we are not going to permit unionism to fasten upon us the train of evils certain to follow the Gomper's programme. Following the precepts of democracy, we have built in wealth, in culture and power, an empire unsurpassed in all the annals of history. The splendors of Rome, and of Spain,

and of all the old empire in ruins are dim in comparison with the brilliant things we have achieved in this democracy. We have blazed a new way and fashioned newer and fresher and higher hopes and dreams for mankind everywhere, and it would be a crime against civilization for us to permit forces over which we have control to shatter the fabric we have built and quench the light we have kindled on these shores. We must still stand for the right of men to work without let or hindrance, as we still stand for the right of men to worship, else become apostates to the faith of our fathers, surrender our liberties, and return to the tyrannies which for more than fifteen centuries burdened and galled us.

It is a peculiar and unpleasant commentary upon conditions in America that in the matter of the right to work we are less free than in any other essential particular. In religion, in politics, in education, in all things having a vital relation to our general well-being we are free for all practical

purposes; but when it comes to the question of a man's vital right to earn his living in the sweat of his brow, we find a barrier which compels us to submit to a condition no whit better than industrial bondage.

Work ought at least to be as free as worship.

We follow our conscience into whatever church may appeal to it, and no man or body of men, and no law of state or nation, can hinder or hamper us in the selection.

It ought to be, and, as a fact, is our right to follow our capacity to contract into whatever remunerative position we may be fit to fill, and unless we wipe out the soundest and most sacred of the great principles upon which we have built the republic, no man or body of men, and no law of state or nation can hinder or hamper us in the selection.

V.

DIVORCING GOVERNMENT AND RELIGION

DEMOCRACY in America, when established, was the direct antithesis of the class systems of government which for centuries had burdened humanity. It was a protest against nearly seventeen centuries of minority misrule and corruption in the Old World. The history of European and Asiatic countries was a history of the oppression and exploitation of the masses for the benefit and enrichment of the classes. Whether in Persia and Egypt, or in England, France or Germany, the ecclesiastics alone, or in combination with a merciless class of militarists, had been in either complete or partial control of all the agencies of government, and under these systems of class rule, with church and state functions mixed, the human race passed through the most miserable periods of its history.

Before we unionize our federal system of government, along with our local systems, and thus place our political fortunes, our personal and property rights, in the hands of a class representing an inconsequential minority of our population, it will profit us to glance briefly at the history of these depressing periods when the church was also the state. We broke the old alliance. We set up a system which sought to make men free. For more than a hundred years we have lived and prospered under a system of government which has in it none of the infamous feature of a class system; we dedicated it in perpetuity to the sublime doctrine of equal and exact justice to all men, without regard to race, color or creed; we have fought to keep burning the light which our fathers first flared in a wild and inhospitable wilderness, and we have seen our country grow in wealth and in power for good until enlightened men everywhere look upon it as the hope of the world.

What was the condition of mankind

before the establishment of the American system of government? Look where we may, the question brings us face to face with the saddest chapters of human history. The church and the state suffered equally under the ancient regime of unionized functions. Ignorance held the people in bondage. Science made no progress. Poverty increased. In England, France and Germany social conditions were appalling. Children were born and grew into manhood and womanhood in mud huts without windows, with earthen floors, and without ventilation or sanitation. There was no privacy in the homes of the poor, no modesty, and, in too many instances, not much virtue, for the lower layers of society were as corrupt as the upper layers; and both the church and the state reeked with filth and social vices.

Rulers, priests or individuals, who were enlightened and bold enough to quarrel with conditions which were holding civilization in check and dimming the light which had broken on the world as a result of the Nazarene's

teachings, were anathematized, and if they escaped the stake, it was to enter into a still more debasing alliance which sought to perpetuate the oppressive and plundering infamies of class rule.

There has never been a time in human history when class rule, whether priestly or kingly, or a combination of the two, did not mean the most debasing social and moral conditions among all classes of society.

Under terms and conditions which would surrender the rights of the vast majority of Americans having no interest in or relation to the present struggle between classes, to one of these classes, or to either of them, we might reasonably expect a return to the barbaric conditions with which history has made us familiar.

It is not possible to lay too much stress on the solemn warnings of history in the immediate bearing which these warnings have upon the problem posed by the class struggle in America. The analogy between a religionized state and a unionized state is as nearly

perfect as history affords, though the inevitable consequences of unionizing our federal and local systems of government probably would acquaint us with horrors more depressing and more infamous than any with which history has familiarized us.

VI.

HISTORIC ANALOGIES

WHAT it would mean for Unionism to rob Americans of that freedom they have enjoyed for more than one hundred years, freedom to do as they please so long as they do not trench upon the equal rights of their fellows, is best illustrated and emphasized by conditions which existed in the countries of the Old World during more than seventeen centuries of church domination, of the affairs of state, and a comparison of these conditions with conditions in our own country and time.

It may not be pleasant, but it will not be unprofitable to lift the curtain, as it were, and glance backward that we may know what a return to class rule may have in store for us in this free and enlightened republic.

The fine culture and the power of

Rome and Greece had gone. The imperial splendor of the Caesars was a mere memory. The forces of a new and brilliant civilization were in restraint, and men and women had become mere pawns, to be moved hither and thither, at the pleasure of designing and debauched priests and their corrupt political allies.

It is difficult for Americans to realize fully the wretched conditions of humanity in the Old World during these centuries.

We are free; they were enslaved; we know the ineffaceable blessings of science; they were ignorant, and often incestuous; we know the need and reap the benefits of sanitation; they lived in filth; we have conquered disease; they surrendered to it; we care for the afflicted, whether of mind or body; they tortured or destroyed them; we have our benevolences, our charities, for the weak and the needy; the unfortunates of these centuries of darkness and impious dogma knew only the brutal hand of pillage and plunder; we have filled the world with the wonders of

our inventors; they plodded along with the old tools and the devices bequeathed them from earlier centuries; they made no discoveries, no progress in the arts and sciences until men began to feel a law of liberty asserting itself within them, and began to realize, too, the appalling consequences in a state which was at best a mere appanage of the church.

They had no commerce, no industry in the modern sense, insurance was looked upon and denounced as an interference with divine will; it was against the teachings of the bible for any but a Jew to charge interest on money; all interest charges were usurious, and usury was denounced by both human and divine law, and in the meantime both the church and the state were used to enhance the fortunes and add to the pleasures of depraved and drunken priests and their depraved and drunken political allies.

The classes, representing a small minority of the population, held large estates and enjoyed luxurious incomes; the masses, the overwhelming, but help-

less, ignorant and enslaved majority, owned nothing, and had nothing except the meager pittances the classes permitted them to have; their portion consisted of enforced slavery, starvation, ignorance, disease, torture, and death in due season.

Such were the appalling results of the union of church and state.

The price humanity paid to get away from these conditions is familiar history, for we never got completely away from them until this republic was established a little more than a century and a quarter ago.

The men who established the American republic made the first organized and successful protest against the religious, political and economic tyrannies of the old order; they dedicated the republic to the liberty of man, woman and child, broke the ancient trammels of ecclesiasticism, and indicated for all time the right of mankind everywhere to be free, and if we now abandon this heritage by permitting unionism to become the keeper of consciences and the shaper of our des-

tinies, we will wipe out more than one hundred years of unexampled progress and brilliant achievement in the arts, in the sciences, in politics and business and in every other sphere of useful human activity.

VII.

THE LAW OF COMPENSATION APPLIED TO LABOR

IN any survey of the labor situation in the United States, with particular reference to the demands of labor, and the tendency of these demands still further to involve the government in the particular enterprises of labor, several things are profoundly impressive. And these things are vital not only from an economic standpoint, but vital also in their relation to the fundamental rights of employers of all classes and the millions of men and women who have invested their savings in the stocks and other securities of the enterprises of these same employers.

Labor has demanded and secured shorter hours of service and increased pay; insurance against bodily injury or death; minimum wage laws; laws providing for the inspection of factories, mercantile establishments and

other places of business; laws providing for safety appliances; and a considerable list of other laws having to do, in theory, at least, with the physical, moral and general well being of men and women who work for a living.

What labor has accomplished in a rightful way in securing laws and with the general purpose of these laws there can be no just quarrel, if we take a broad, humanitarian view of them; but, surely, we cannot be blind to the fact of staggering significance that the full burden of these changes, forced usually by altered national and state legislative policies, has fallen upon the employing classes of the country. In some particulars there may have been compensatory advantages in these changes; but from the standpoint of employers these advantages have been negligible, but, in more than one sphere of industrial activity, shorter hours and larger pay, and pecuniary outlays incident to other changes, have absorbed normal profits, and, in not a few instances, have forced enterprises either out of business or into the hands of receivers.

These laws do not bear equally upon the two classes most concerned in the policies and practices they seek to enforce, and to that extent they do violence to the rights of one class for supposed benefit of another class. Of course, labor ultimately derives no *actual* benefit from any law or practice which hurts business, in its larger sense, for labor must, with capital, share in the losses which follow the application and enforcement of policies and laws which undermine business. Labor and business must win or lose, prosper or fail together, for each is part and parcel of the other.

But the economic injuries which result from this continuing conflict between men who work and men who pay is not confined to the classes immediately involved in these struggles. These injuries fall with crushing weight upon the whole industrial fabric.

Losses in one sphere of activity are supplied from the gains of another.

The bad debts of a bankrupt busi-

ness are paid out of the profits of a going concern.

Idle men are maintained, fed and clothed, out of the earnings of men who work.

The law of conmpensation works as certainly in the industrial world as it does elsewhere in nature. We may have business failures; but there are no real losses except in the energy and power of idle men and idle machinery, for idle men must be fed and clothed and sheltered, and they, perforce, look to employed men for what they must have.

The man who works pays the loafer's bills.

Business squares the accounts of the bankrupt.

If we are to continue piling upon business burdens which it cannot bear, burdens which will absorb the sum of its normal and natural profits, we will have no business, and if we have no business we will need no labor.

Such is the certain trend and ultimate meaning of laws, policies and practices which exact more and more of the man who pays, and less and less

of the man who works. In labor's demands upon capital, there is an economic limit beyond which it is neither just nor safe for labor to pass, for to pass it would throw both labor and capital upon the raw edge of adversity, and usher in upon us a period of economic distress and civic and social chaos of bitter significance and unparallelled magnitude.

When we turn from the purely economic dangers of these persistent encroachments of unionism upon an industrial system, to the political dangers which inhere in equally persistent encroachments upon our national, state and local systems of government, we face a graver problem, for it involves our institutional integrity. Unionism is active in politics. It has newspapers of its own. It is a factor in all political contests. Its labels must be put upon the cards, badges and placards of candidates of all parties for office. It insists upon writing its name into party platforms. It exacts pledges from all candidates for office wherever and whenever it is able to do it. It sup-

Madison Wis. New Haven Conn.

ports or opposes, praises or denounces men for office according to its particular aims. It has its spokesmen in Congress, in State assemblies, in City Councils, and in other minor bodies. It is the most persistent, the noisiest and the most dangerous element in contemporary American politics, not only because it is in open and shameless alliance with radicals having no sympathy with American institutions and ideals, either in the home or in public life, but also because it is seeking to convert the Amerrican system of government into a class system, and to use it, in all of its branches, and with all of its powers, to foster and promote class hatreds and antagonisms of infinite danger to our peace and safety.

History has made us familiar with the infamies of government founded upon distinctions of class. We know something of the tyrannies of minorities; something of the wastefulness and corruption, of the depredations, drunkenness and debauchery, which marked older efforts to subordinate the rights of civilians to the whims and selfish

designs of priestly militarism. These things we put behind us when we framed the government under which we now live, and we cannot hazard the danger of a return to them without sponging the slate and changing our political faith.

Always, perhaps, there will be disputes and struggles between parties and between classes in America; but we can no more make this government of ours the government of one class to the exclusion of the rights and interests of another class than we can make of it the government of one religion to the exclusion of another religion. Always its attitude must remain impartial, else the even and exact justice vouched us, and all the enumerated blessings promised us in the organic law, will become empty and without meaning.

If labor is to put its approval upon all the acts of public officials in America, if we are to have no laws except such as labor may write, no court decisions except such as labor may approve, no men in any branch of the

civil or military service except those who swear first allegiance to organized labor, we will soon find ourselves under a system of organized, aggressive and heartless tyranny more to be dreaded than any of the tyrannies, political or ecclesiastical, with which history has made us familiar. It will mean the passing of our democratic ideals, the decay and crumbling of our institutions, and the turning back of the best forces of our civilization.

Related to the economic and political problems posed by organized labor's aggressions, there are certain other state policies which are of momentous concern to the employing classes, and which accentuate still further labor's mistaken idea that with the right to organize comes the right to dictate and to destroy. These policies, applied to utility corporations, are of a regulative character, and under them Public Service Boards are empowered to prescribe the character of service to be rendered, and the price to be charged for it, but are given no power to say what utility corporations are to pay for the services rendered them.

VIII.

UNIONIZING THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

TIME was when it would have been considered treasonable to unionize any department of the federal government, or any minor division or branch of it, for if it is proper to unionize any part of it, then it is proper to unionize all of it. Yet, as the result of the sly labors of Samuel Gompers and his aides the principle of unionism has been grafted upon our federal system.

Roughly there are a half million men and women, exclusive of the Army and Navy, in the federal service. This includes the more than 42,000 employes in the District of Columbia, and the more than 296,000 postal employes. More that 83,00 employes are in unions. That is getting close to one-fifth of the total number of employes in the federal service; and Gompers is still busy in efforts to drive still further into our federal system a wedge which will shake it to its foundations,

if, indeed, it does not split and destroy it.

This effort to unionize a government which represents more than 100,000,000 people is made at the behest of about 2,810,420 persons who are in unions of one kind or another. That is the total number of persons holding trade union membership in America, and includes about 150,000 persons in Canadian unions that affilliate with the American Federation of Labor. There are in the American Federation about one hundred and ten national and international unions.

Comparatively only a small per cent of the laborers of America are in unions, and the total membership of unions in America represent only about two per cent of the American population.

The American government was not established and is not maintained to represent two per cent of the American population to the exclusion of the rights and interests of the other ninety-two per cent.

This effort to graft upon our federal system a principle alien to its underlying and fundamental purposes is of profound significance, and will justify a rather critical survey.

Government, under our theory, is impersonal. It is not a One Man system, nor a One Family's, nor a Creed's, nor a Class' system. It is presumed to represent, with equal faithfulness to the common good, every man, woman and child living under it, without regard to their religion, politics or avocation; and any principle at variance with this notice is wholly out of harmony with the genius and spirit of the American system of government.

The fathers came here to avoid precisely what a unionized federal system would force upon their children. The fathers wanted liberty of conscience, liberty of speech, liberty of action, and they came to a wilderness to carve out of it a system of government under which they could secure these coveted boons. Back of them

was a long, bloody struggle against the twin tyrannies of religious and political intolerance and persecution. Back of them was the long and saddening warfare between science and superstition, between advancing civilization and the hindering beliefs of the ancients. The painted chief of the savage period had passed on through the splendors of the barbaric age, to become the ruler of men by Divine right; and the church was the state. The man's religion was his politics, and his politics was his religion.

When we look back upon that period of persecution, with its instruments of torture, its decadent morals, and its intellectual and social desolation, it is to view the most melancholy chapter in history.

But men had begun to struggle toward the light of a better day. Erasmus, warmed by his wine, and dreaming in the mountains, warned the church and the state of the significance of Martin Luther, of the onrush of the Reformation; but the sotted princelings of the old regime and

their priestly allies could not understand that the mass of humanity was marching on toward a period of broader and greater liberty for each unit of the human mass, toward a time when the church and state would no longer be one and inseparable.

Revolts against the tyrannies and persecutions of a religionized state were in time, followed by revolts against the equally galling tyrannies of a state founded upon the Divine rights of kings; and, after a weary pilgrimage through centuries of blood and tears, our own fathers, upon this soil founded a system of government fit for freedom, and dedicated it, in perpetuity, to liberty of conscience, liberty of speech, and liberty of action.

Between a government religionized by a minority, and a government unionized by a minority of those who live under it, the analogy is alike striking and significant.

Trade unionism *per se* is unobjectionable so long as it seeks to work out its peculiar problems without hurt to to the common mass; but when, as an

inconsequential minority in a nation of 100,000,000 people, it seeks to unionize the entire system of government under which it is permitted to exist, without regard for either the opinions or the rights of ninety-eight per cent of the population living under the same system, and helping to sustain it, the issue posed becomes one of threatening and vital magnitude.

Clothed with absolute and unlimited power, minorities are notoriously tyrannical. That is why we Americans got away from kings; and it is why, too, when we framed the federal constitution, we were as careful to guard against the possible tyrannies of minorities as against the possible tyrannies of majorities.

Control by trade unionism, the inevitable result of a completely unionized federal system, would be no less offensive to Americans than control by a Ceasar or a Napoleon, and it probably would be no less dangerous and brutal in the nature of its tyrannies than the church control under an organized system of plunder and perse-

cution, such as we have known in the history of civilization's bitter march towards the truth and light of juster and happier human conditions.

True, we have classes, and the class struggle in America, as surely as Rome had classes and a class struggle in the time of the Gracchi; but our government specifically is not a class government; it is not Unionism's and it is not Capitalism's government; it is the government of all, and for all the citizens who live under it, and we cannot now change its character without hazarding the dangers of a return to ancient tyrannies in new form.

Nor have we over-emphasized the meaning and significance of these efforts to unionize the federal system. With all the departments of the executive branch unionized, with Congress unionized, with the judiciary unionized, and with the army and navy unionized, and placed at the beck and call of two per cent of the American population; and with this element more or less intimately allied with saboters, syndicalists, and other radicals of alien

origin having no sympathy with our national institutions or our aspirations either at home or abroad, our condition in a real crisis, might easily become one of sore perplexity and distress.

With the government, and all the machinery and wealth at its command, out of the hands of the masses, and in the hands of a class harboring bitter and dangerous resentment of long duration, we would face a situation which might quickly lead to our final undoing.

Sober Americans will shrink from a contemplation of misfortunes which might follow the unionization of our federal system of government.

No good American can look upon what Gompers has been doing, with this end in view, without a feeling of alarm, for Gompers has made some progress.

The Union label has been rather too conspicious in our politics. Men who run for elective offices are afraid, as a rule, not to pay due homage to the badge of unionism and men who have

gone into office usually have won on an expressed or implied promise not to interfere with the plans of Gompers and the army of agents who are working with him to a common end.

These practices tend to rob the Government of its impartiality. They help to make the government an advocate rather than a judge, the partisan of one class in an economic struggle as against the interests and rights of another class. It is a perversion of our government to put it to such uses, and the whole tendency is to subvert the character of the American political system and to condemn and destroy the integrity of our institutions.

Thus far our only concern has been the broad political principles upon which we have rested the fabric of our government. It is equally the government of the Jew and Gentile, of the Protestant and the Catholic, of the Capitalist and the Laborer; our executive departments, our legislative assembles, and our courts are alike open to all upon equal terms, for our government can make no distinction be-

tween creeds, races or classes without breaking from the line charted by our fathers.

But what of the economic aspects of this tendency toward a complete unionization of our federal system? The question is staggering in what it suggests, for our entire commercial, financial and industrial systems, under the Gompers' plan, would be placed absolutely in the hands of the unionized two per cent of our population. That would be an economic calamity of appalling magnitude. We have a quarrel in America between the men who work and the men who pay. It is a continuing quarrel. Frequently the government must adjust these differences. Its position is coldly impartial. It seeks to do even and exact justice. Shall we let a party to the dispute settle it? Shall we return to the ancient practice of allowing the accuser, as judge and jury, to pass sentence upon the accused?

If we attempt to fit ourselves into the garb Mr. Gompers has cut for us,

we will have to step back into dead centuries to do it.

Arbitration would become an empty dream, for if a controverted issue is to be determined by one of the disputants, as would be the case under a unionized federal system, there could be no such thing as arbitration, no such thing as elemental justice in the determination of our industrial disputes.

Our railroads, telegraphs, telephones and other utilities of the vital public convenience and necessity, and our banks, and factories and mines, and all other commercial and industrial establishments, may at any time become involved in the constantly recurring quarrel between capital and labor. Under a completely unionized system of government, with practically the controlling agencies of the government committee on one side of the controversy, what would be the plight of America and Americans in an industrial crisis? It is a grave question, and one not to be answered by sentimental and cowardly pandering to one

class of our citizens on account of the pretended ability of this class to deliver votes at election time. It presents a broader and bigger problem than any problem involved in the mere expediency of our politics; indeed, in the fullest sense, it is an American problem, for it involves the stability and integrity of the American system of government in all that it means to the American people.

IX.

THE OLD AND THE NEW SAMUEL GOMPERS

Authors Note: The first of the following articles on Mr. Samuel Gompers was written before his active patriotic co-operation with the United States government in enforcing its war policies.. The second article was written subsequent to what we hope to be a permanent change in Mr. Gomper's attitude toward American political institutions.. We hope he will live fully up to his newer professions and opportunities. Whether he is in future to deserve the first or the second of the criticisms we have offered must depend absolutely upon Mr. Samuel Gompers himself.

THE OLD SAMUEL GOMPERS

The certain prospect of infamies which would follow a change as radical in our institutional character make it impossible for us to offer any homage to charity in dealing with Mr. Gompers. When the heart of our whole political system is involved, we can make no allowances for honest

differences of opinion. Mr. Gompers is not ignorant; he is able, shrewd, far-seeing. And his effort to graft upon our system of government policies which endanger our institutional integrity must be regarded as alike deliberate and designing. If we accept Mr. Gompers and his policies, we must first surrender our birthright to men who are unfriendly to our rights and our interest, to men who have inherited the accumulated hatreds and animosities of centuries of quarreling and bickering over real or fancied economic inequalities and injustices.

Many of the nice issues presented by these quarrels are not yet settled. They are vital issues. We do not want to submit them to either a biased or a prejudiced court. We do not want to submit them to Mr. Gompers, for as a party to the quarrel, he is a part, and a big part of the issue. Yet, is that not what Mr. Gompers, by his efforts to unionize our federal system, is asking us to do.

In dealing with Mr. Gompers we do not wish to be either extravagant

or unfair; we are not concerned w
any quarrel with his right to orgar
laboring men of all classes into uni
for their own benefit and betterme
and we have no quarrel with unioni
insofar as it seeks fairly to improve
conditions of men and women v
toil for a living. But we have a qu
rel, a grave and vital quarrel with l
Gompers, not only because of his
pudent assault upon the underly
principles of the American system
government, but also because of
treasonable methods employed by h
to force revolutionary and destr
tive policies upon the American p
ple.

Mr. Gompers is at the head of
army of more than 2,000,000 wa
earners in America. Under an o
which all members of the Ameri
Federation of Labor are required
take, their first allegiance is to
Federation. Thus, our governme
our constitution and laws are subord
ated to the rules and regulations
the American Federation of Lab
and to the commands and dictates

Mr. Gompers, the titular head of this big organization of wage earners. Such an oath is treasonable; and any man who would prescribe an oath of that character for an American citizen, or any citizen who would take an oath of that character, is a traitor to the American republic, and ought to be stripped of his citizenship.

Is it any wonder that sober Americans are alarmed at the elements of danger they clearly perceive in Mr. Gompers' plan to completely unionize our federal system?

Mr. Gompers is not only attacking our liberties, but, with treasonable intent, he is seeking to undermine and tear down the government upon which we must depend for the protection and safeguarding of our liberties. Already he is denying the right of men and women to work for a living, except with his consent, and upon such terms as he may prescribe; and now, by his efforts to unionize the federal system, and local systems of government, he arrogantly asserts that the American people should not have the

right to put any man in any position of the public service, except with his consent, and upon such terms as Mr. Gompers may see fit to prescribe!

The proposition is so astounding, so staggering in trend and import, it is difficult to state it without impatience, and impossible to debate it without indignation.

We have lived and labored under the impression that positions in the public service of America were at all times open to all upon equal terms; we have taught our children to believe that neither race, nor color, nor creed could or would interfere with any ambition that they may have to enter upon the duties of any position, high or low, in the public service, and we have taught them to believe, too, that whatever else might happen to them under laws prescribing and limiting their duties and their rights, always the courts must remain open to them for calm and impartial redress of their wrongs and to keep them secure in privileges the government has

ıt to deny and they have no pow-
surrender.

ese impressions, beliefs and
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ı like Mr. Gompers are hence-
:o shape our policies, for with a
zed federal system, only men
:ertified union cards would be
ɜ to public positions. Our pub-
ices, executive, legislative and
istrative, and our courts, repre-
g the last word in our effort to
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would become as so many "clos-
ps," to be opened only and filled
t the bidding of Mr. Gompers or
:cessors in office.

r two reasons Mr. Gompers is
King for us: Firstly, because
not want any king; and secondly,
e if we wanted a king, we would
ınt Mr. Gompers.

t this man is undertaking to
upon our system of government
:iple which will subvert and des-
; and make of him, during the
span of his day, the absolute
· of our rights, our liberties and

our lives. It is not pleasant to paint the picture as we have painted it; but the exactions of truth are not always pleasant; when working with truth, and for truth's sake, we must work with such material as truth offers us. In tracing briefly some of the lines of this class struggle, and the dangers in contemporary efforts to rob the government of its impartial position, we have sought to be faithful, earnest, emphatic, for it is an issue of portentious magnitude and we believe we are not unduly alarmed over its meaning. The problem is vital; and we must either solve it wisely, or surrender what we can never hope to regain.

THE NEW SAMUEL GOMPERS

No man in America, no man in the world in view of existing international turmoil and confusion, has a greater opportunity to render mankind an enduring service than has Samuel Gompers in the new responsibilities recently assumed by him as head of the Alliance for Labor and Democracy. Of course we may not now fully know all

the plans and purposes of the Alliance; but in view of the more recent statements and performances of Mr. Gompers, all indicating an intense loyalty to the American government in the present world crisis, and suggesting at least that the head of the American Federation of Labor may have seen a new and larger light, it is fair to assume that the Alliance has, or will have a program which will give Mr. Gompers an unusual chance to use in proper fashion, and for the general good, his unusual talents.

It is almost impossible not to believe that Mr. Gompers has undergone a radical metamorphosis so far as his views on economic questions are concerned. That would not be surprising. Men in all walks of life now are revising their opinions and there is no reason why Mr. Gompers should not change his opinions on some of the questions of the day. I like to believe, at any rate, that this leader of organized labor has not only changed his own opinion on certain aspects of the labor question, but that he also has

influenced other leaders of considerable influence to change their opinions in the same way and to the same extent.

It would not be fair to overlook an element of political shrewdness in the recent activities of Mr. Gompers. We have not known many shrewder men in the public life of America than Mr. Gompers. Cool of head, incisive in his mental processes, a close student and a good judge of men, and possessing powers of analysis not possessed by any other man connected with organized labor, Mr. Gompers has been quick to perceive the stupendous economic changes bound to follow in the wake of the war, and has been equally quick to understand that certain fundamental changes in public opinion would necessarily forerun these changes in our economic system. Naturally he has thrown himself into the foreground with a view of securing for organized labor whatever advantage might develop during the progress of these changes. For his cleverness in this respect Mr. Gompers is to be ad-

and praised even by men who
lisagreed with him.
ıt what of the future of our new
ompers and his Alliance for La-
ıd Democracy? Time alone can
r the question. If Mr. Gompers
ues to press the demand for a
d shop," at a tremendous yearly
;rial loss in America on account
ikes, he will not live up to the
tunities of his new position as
spokesman for the Alliance for
and Democracy. Moreover, is
ıe "closed shop" philosophy too
r akin to organized coercion to
any place in the programme of
liance battling for democracy?
; liberty, personal liberty, liberty
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al liberty in America, for he has
ın implacable enemy of the "open
principle as applied to our in-
al establishments, a principle
recognizes the right of men to

work where, for whom and for whatever wage they please, and the equal right of other men to employ these men if they found it to their advantage to do it. Opposition to the "open shop" principle has plunged Mr. Gompers and his Federation into more costly controversies than all other questions combined. It would be interesting to know what attitude the Alliance for Labor and Democracy will assume toward this question, especially in view of the fact that the present Secretary of Labor in President Wilson's cabinet has officially put a taboo on all demands for a "recognition of the union" in the plan outlined by him for the settlement of industrial disputes. Mr. Gompers seems to be very close to the present Secreary of Labor, and it is not likely that the secretary reached his conclusion concerning demands for a "recognition of the union" without first discussing the matter with the official head of the American Federation of Labor.

We like to think of Mr. Gompers in

a new role; we have quarreled much with him on account of his aggressive attitude toward the "open shop" principle and on occasions we have not hesitated to lash him for a policy we believed to be fundamentally wrong and inherently undemocratic. We are not opposed to unions or the union principle; but we are democratic enough, just enough, to respect the rights and opinions of men who may not agree with us on this, or any other question, and we have never been able to understand why Mr. Gompers and other labor leaders could not take that view of it, for certainly it is the fair view, and the only allowable view in a democracy.

If Mr. Gompers as head of the Alliance for Labor and Democracy carries his prejudiced opposition to the "open shop" into his new field of labor he will not only help to continue an error which has yearly cost both labor and capital millions of dollars in America, but he will also offend against that Democracy which the Alliance was formed to foster and promote.

A great gate has swung open for Samuel Gompers; and the opportunities which beckon him are as numerous and vital, in an economic sense, as were those which gave to Paul his spiritual inspiration after his conversion.

What use will be made of them?

Good use, we hope, for it is a rare chance for service of a high order, and a service that will endure perhaps for untold ages.

X.

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSIONS

ORGANIZED labor, by supporting certain advanced regulative policies in the several states; policies which have no immediate bearing upon labor's fight for shorter hours and increased wages, has still further contributed to the embarrassment of legitimate business, and has helped to graft upon the American system a legislative anomaly wholly out of harmony with the spirit and genius of our institutions.

Public Service Commissions, acting upon the theory that the people are entitled to a maximum of service at a minimum of cost, now prescribe the service to be rendered by utility corporations and fix the price they are to charge for it. On the face of it, the theory seems to be sound enough. Applied, it becomes an appalling injustice. These service boards standardize and prescribe the kind of service utility corporations,—transportation, water, light, power and other companies,—are to render the public and compel them

to render it at a price fixed by the service boards; but they are not empowered to standardize and prescribe the kind of service employers have a right to exact of their employees, or to fix the price they are to pay for it. Obviously, such regulation is class regulation. Such legislation does not bear equally upon all persons within the scope of the law.

If service boards are to say what utility corporations are to charge for the services they render, why should they not also have the power to say what these same corporations are to pay for services rendered them by employes? How can these boards determine what is a fairly remunerative charge for utility corporations to make for a given service without first determining what it costs these corporations to produce the service? And if these boards are to standardize and prescribe the character of service to be rendered by utility corporations, why should they not also standardize and prescribe the character of service employes are to render these corporations?

Valuation proceedings, as they have been conducted by service boards, have failed utterly to answer these questions. These proceedings, more or less, have been abortive. Probably the most distressing thing connected with valuation proceedings has been the resort to confusing and dishonest engineering fictions of one kind and another; but, in a measure at least, these dishonest practices have been forced upon utility corporations by the ignorant and inequitable demands public boards have made upon them for services at glaringly unremunerative rates.

What it cost a utility corporation to produce a given service, plus a reasonable return upon its investment, ought to be the measure of what the corporation would charge for the service it renders the public. But this basic fact, because it has to do with the rights of an aggressive and uncompromising element in our politics, is not determined by any of the service boards of this county, and no adequate provision is made in the law for its full and fair determination.

What these blundering and incomplete regulative policies, forced upon us largely by organized labor, have cost us, it would be too tedious to try to recount in detail, for it would be merely a matter of summing up our losses. They have forced many of our railroads into the hands of receivers; slackened constructive energies; stagnated the arteries of commerce; lengthened the distance between the producer and the consumer; confused our state and national jurisdictions; piled up litigation of an expensive character and otherwise burdened us with economic, social and political evils.

Except for the jealousy of state jurisdictions, and a rather dangerous tendency to pander to the labor vote, a remedy for these evils probably could be found in the enlargement of the duties and powers of the Interstate Commerce Commission. Remedy does not seem to lie in any other direction.

XI.

LABOR AS A REACTIONARY INFLUENCE

WHOEVER may have perused the preceding pages cannot fail to have been impressed by the fact that labor, as represented by some of the accredited leaders of organized labor, is one of the most powerful reactionary forces of modern times.

Instead of furthering progressive movements, the attitude labor leaders have too often assumed toward these movements has tended to retard them, and to make more difficult and slower the development of a juster and more stable economic order. We do not mean to say labor has afforded the only reactionary influence of our time. On the contrary the forces with which organized labor quarrels often is as much at war with substantial economic progress as are the forces of labor; but it is a singular fact, and a not very creditable commentary on contemporary

public opinion as voiced in public prints, that labor is not at all regarded as a reactionary influence. The opinion seems to be rather that labor is one of the most helpfully progressive forces in our civilization. But this opinion will not stand the test of analysis. True, labor has fathered and championed a great many progressive policies, some of them of direct benfit to labor, and some of them having a larger economic and social meaning. In the main, however, labor's interest in the progressive movements of the age is limited to policies and practices having a direct relation to men and women affiliated with labor unions.

Labor has been a reactionary influence in three vital ways: (1) By opposing the introduction of new and more economical devices and methods in industry and business; (2) By making unreasonable or untimely demands of employers or of the government, and (3) by giving sanction and support to any policy, no matter by what group of men proposed, or however, radical in its terms, which has for its main pur-

pose the upsetting of the existing economic order. In addition to these manifestations of reactionary influences, organized labor frequently is aggressively opposed to broad state and national policies which go to the very vitals of our political integrity, and, in some instances, as in labor's opposition to national military and naval preparedness, involves our ability to defend and maintain our independence and our sovereignty as a nation.

If labor's voice had controlled we would not be where we now are in mechanical progress, for labor was bitterly opposed to the labor-saving machine on the mistaken theory that it would throw vast hordes of men out of work. Labor was slow to realize that a machine that would do the work of ten men would give employment, not merely to the nine men supposedly displaced, but to a hundred, or possibly a larger number of men, on account of the energies it would loosen and accelerate, and the new demands it would make, and the new opportunities it would create. Labor has been equally

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It requires no argument to
out the obvious reactionary inf
labor has thus exercised in our ti

When we come to consider the
of all these things, plus the losse
bitterness due to industrial dis
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lockouts, riots, and the loss of
and the waste of expensive plant
idleness, and the suffering, and
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to what extent, and in what man
labor has been a powerful reaction
influence in these modern times.

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blame and all the burden on lab
That would not be either fair or tru
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and equally untruthful, not to set down, without fear or favor, the part labor has played in holding in check the progressive movements of an enlightened age.

We want, and we mean to have, better, juster and happier economic and social conditions in America; this is a free country in the fullest and best meaning of the phrase; here conscience is free; opinion is free; speech is free; and if we are to remain free spiritually and mentally, we must be free industrially also in spite of any of the forces of reaction which may seek to keep us in a state of bondage. We must be as free to work as we are to talk, or write, or worship, for if any body of men has the right to close the door of the workshop in our faces and to name the place where we are to work, some body of men may also seek to name the church in which we are to worship, and that would put us far back into an age of unspeakable and unbearable intolerance, superstitution and oppression.

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